

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
THIRD QUARTER REPORT-FY 2001
For the period April 1, 2001 through June 30, 2001

SUBMITTED BY: Lab Director/Division Director/Group Chief: John Hunter, Division Director, Fisheries Resources.

Title of Accomplishment or Milestone: Summary of the 2000 U.S. North and South Pacific albacore troll fisheries.

Purpose of Activity: Collect, summarize and distribute data essential to assessment of Pacific albacore stocks and for monitoring fishery performance.

Background: Catch data obtained from west coast states, logbook data collected from cooperating fishermen and length-frequency data obtained through port sampling from U.S. troll and baitboat vessels operating in the Pacific Ocean are routinely processed by the SWFSC for use in stock assessments. Logbooks are provided to fishermen who record fishing information and provide the information to the SWFSC. Length-frequency data are collected through a Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission contract to Washington, Oregon and California state fisheries agencies and from NMFS offices in American Samoa and Hawaii.

Description of Accomplishment and Significant Results: Data for the 1999-2000 South Pacific and 2000 North Pacific fishing seasons were processed, made available to scientists to monitor the fishery and to assess the condition of the stocks, and summarized in a report for distribution to the public. The 2000 U.S. catch of North Pacific albacore was 9,300 metric tons (t), a decrease from the 10,200 t caught in 1999. Areas fished by the North Pacific fleet in 2000 were distributed off California and in offshore areas early in the season, off of Washington and Oregon during mid season and again in offshore areas and off California late in the season. The 1999-2000 U.S. catch of South Pacific albacore was 2,700 t, an increase from 1,400 t in the 1998-1999 season. Areas fished in the South Pacific were about the same in 2000 as in 1999. The catch-per-unit effort, in number of fish per day fished, for the North Pacific increased slightly from 37 fish per day in 1999 to 41 fish per day in 2000. The catch-per-unit effort in the South Pacific decreased slightly from 77 fish per day in the 1998-1999 season to 70 fish per day in the 1999-2000 season. Average size of fish in the North Pacific catch decreased from 73 cm in 1999 to 69 cm in 2000, and in the South Pacific, increased from 70 cm in the 1998-1999 season to 72 cm in the 1999-2000 season.

Significance of Accomplishment (e.g., to the Center, to Management and to NMFS Strategic Plan Goals): Logbook data are collected under the High-Seas Fishing Compliance Act of 1995. Data collected are being used to monitor the fisheries and for assessing the condition of the stocks. This is part of the NMFS strategic plan goal of building/maintaining sustainable fisheries.

Problems: None.

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